

IPSWICH SELECT BOARD
Meeting of Monday, January 7, 2019
Ipswich Town Hall | 25 Green Street

Pursuant to Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Select Board was held on Monday, January 7, 2019 at 7:00pm in Meeting Room A.

With a quorum present, Nishan Mootafian called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Board Members present: Nishan Mootafian, Chair; William Whitmore, Vice Chair; Linda Alexson; William Craft; Edward Rauscher

Also present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

Abbreviations Used: FY20, Fiscal Year 2020; DPW, Department of Public Works

Public Information: Agenda, Meeting Packet

Welcome/Announcements

Mr. Marino informed the Board that blue lights, indicating a winter parking ban, will be installed soon. A press release will be sent out to formally announce them.

Citizen Queries

Gary Champion (3 Palomino Way) addressed the Board regarding the Essex Pastures housing project on Essex Road. Mr. Champion has reached out to three members of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership but has not received a reply. He would like to see the scale of the project reduced.

Phil Goguen (Kingfisher Road) asked the Board for an update regarding the firetruck lawsuit against Navistar and KME Engines. Mr. Marino stated that he could not discuss specifics at this time as there is an ongoing settlement, but that the Town is expecting a monetary reward when the case is settled. The money will come into the Town as "Miscellaneous Revenue" and most likely be certified as Free Cash.

Change of Manager and Change of Officers Application – St. Lawrence Literary Society Liquor License

Russell Spencer appeared before the Board requesting to have the St. Lawrence Literary Society liquor license transferred to his name as the new manager.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to approve the name change, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: Electric Restoration Fees (2 of 2)

Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved to open the Public Hearing, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Leczynski provided charts requested by the Board comparing the old restoration fees with the proposed new fees. He also made changes clarifying a "large industrial account" as any service larger than 400 amps, stating that such an account would have a restoration fee determined by the cost of two linemen and a meter technician, multiplied by the numbers of hours taken to restore power. Ms. Alexson asked for an update on the decision to send the Step 2 notice by certified mail. Mr. Leczynski stated that the possibility was analyzed, it was determined that with an average of 670 notices sent, the cost of certified mail would amount to around \$4,000. Because only "two or three" accounts actually reach termination of power, the cost could not be justified. Mr. Rauscher agreed with the reason behind the decision. Ms. Alexson also asked if notices will be sent to building owners when their renter's account is in jeopardy. Mr. Leczynski said that while the accounts are only in the tenants' names, property owners would be notified as the cost does eventually revert to them.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to close the Public Hearing, and Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to approve the Electric Light restoration fees, and Mr. Craft seconded with the condition that Mr. Leczynski appear before the Board with an update on the next round of collection fees in June of 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: New Annual Liquor License Application, Medusa d/b/a Zabaglione Restaurant

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to open the Public Hearing, and Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Michael Elpidoforos, president and sole stockholder of Zabaglione, and his attorney Peter Ross appeared before the Board. Mr. Mootafian recused himself upon realizing his wife has a business relationship with Mr. Ross's father. Mr. Elpidoforos would like to reopen the previously closed Salt Rum Bar with a full liquor license. The facility will not host any live entertainment, and Mr. Elpidoforos plans to open sometime in March or April of 2019.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to close the Public Hearing, and Mr. Craft seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to approve the liquor license for Medusa Corp at 1 Market Street, and Ms. Alexson seconded. The motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Planning Department Update

Glenn Gibbs (Town Planner) appeared before the Board to provide an update on the Planning Department.

DOWNTOWN PARKING TASK FORCE/HAMMATT STREET PARKING LOT

The Downtown Parking Task Force was formed in July 2018 and has met twice. They have been surveying the downtown area, focusing on the commuter parking lot and surrounding streets. So far, the task force has concluded that about 80% of cars parked in public lots are stationary for four hours or more, and 40% of these cars are not Ipswich residents. Going forward, the task force seeks to assess how many of these cars are using the commuter rail. Once the data is fully collected and analyzed, the task force will appear before the Board to present their findings and make recommendations. Meetings regarding the Hammatt Street Parking Lot will be rescheduled due to the sudden illness of the commissioned engineer.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

To create the Community Development Plan, a consultant will be hired and a 25-member steering committee will be formed. Mr. Gibbs reported that two proposals have been received from well-regarded firms, and a selection committee has been set up to choose a consultant. Mr. Gibbs and Ms. Alexson discussed a Housing Production Plan and how it could help contribute to the Town's 10% inventory.

RIVERWALK EXTENSION & WAYFINDING SIGN PROGRAM

The extension of the Riverwalk is 60% complete, with setbacks due to inclement weather this fall. Construction will resume in early spring, and a dedication will take place around Memorial Day. Mr. Gibbs reported that the budget is tight, but on target. The wayfinding signs will go out to bid soon, and a digital sign will be installed in May.

TRANSITION PLAN

Mr. Gibbs will be retiring in July, and his last day in office will be at the end of May. He will be using accumulated vacation time. Ethan Parsons (Senior Planner) will be applying for Mr. Gibbs' position, and so both the Town Planner and Senior Planner jobs will be advertised. Candidates are encouraged to apply for both positions if they feel they are qualified, and if Mr. Parsons is not named Town Planner, he intends to remain in his current position. Mr. Gibbs hopes to have a candidate selected by April to allow for a smooth transition.

Open Warrant for ATM 2019

Mr. Mootafian announced that the Warrant will be open from January 7, 2019 until March 11, 2019. Annual Town Meeting will be held on May 14, 2019. A memorandum has been posted on the Town website outlining the process for citizens' petitions.

Mr. Goguen inquired about upcoming budget hearings. It was outlined that Mr. Marino and Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) will present their budget to the Triboard on January 22nd. Every Monday through February and March, department heads will appear before the Select Board to present their budgets. Mr. Mootafian encourages residents to attend the budget hearings to ask questions.

Sean Parker (Turkey Shore Road) would like to see an agenda item added that would call for a public vote to determine any income brought in by a settlement be designated into a fund to pay off Town debt. Mr. Parker also suggested that the Downtown Parking Task Force consider how EBSCO employee parking affects the statistics that Mr. Gibbs presented. (Ms. Alexson, as a member of the task force, confirmed that they are currently taking this into consideration during their surveys.) Mr. Parker also stated that he is not opposed to affordable housing, but does not want to put restrictions on builders. He made the argument that when it comes to supply and demand, more housing will naturally decrease prices for renters.

Mr. Mootafian announced that the deadline for Town department heads to submit articles is February 19th, and citizen petitions must be submitted by March 11th.

Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to open the Warrant for Annual Town Meeting to be held on May 14, 2019, and Mr. Rauscher seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Capital Plan Budget Overview

Mr. Marino will meet with Dr. Brian Blake (Superintendent of Schools) to discuss capital needs and decide what will be brought forward in the FY20 budget.

Approval of Minutes

December 3, 2018

Ms. Alexson abstained from voting on the December 3rd meeting minutes, as she was not present for the meeting.

Vote: Mr. Rauscher moved to approve the minutes, and Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried 4-0.

December 17, 2018

Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to approve the minutes, and Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Town Manager Report

FIRETRUCK UPDATE

A third-party consultant will be inspecting the new engine to ensure reliability.

PAYROLL & BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Marino reported that the combined School and Town Payroll & Benefits Department is running smoothly. They have completed four successful payrolls under the new software.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Lieutenant James "Gus" McInnis has moved into his new position in Fire Prevention. Lieutenant Brett Emerson has moved into a shift lieutenant position. There are two vacant firefighter positions that will be filled using the civil service list.

CLIMATE RESILIENCY COMMITTEE

In the next few months, the committee will appear before the Select Board requesting for Ipswich to become a Green Community.

FACILITIES

Chris Rais has accepted the position of Facilities Director. Mr. Rais is coming from a similar position in Somerville, and has experience with School Dude, facilities assessments, Green Community status, and grant application. His first day with the Town will be January 14th.

UNION CONTRACTS

Four out of seven union contracts have been settled. The Police Union, Labor and Trades Union, and Electric Union are still in negotiations.

85 NORTH RIDGE ROAD

George Hall (Town Counsel) is completing paperwork for an address release to be signed by the abutters of 85 North Ridge Road. The property will go out to bid, with no minimum offer. The responsibility of the land easement will fall on the buyer of the property. Ms. Alexson inquired about other parcels of inventory, and MR. Marino stated that two or three other properties may be available for sale, but they would require work similar to 85 North Ridge Road before they can be put up for sale.

GENERATORS

The bid for generators was given to Power Products, who gave prices of \$64,000 and \$67,000. A natural gas generator will be installed at Town Hall, and a diesel generator will be installed at the Police Station. The old generators will be repurposed at other locations.

BUDGET

Mr. Marino is working with Ms. Johnson to prepare for a January 22nd budget presentation to the Triboard.

New Business

Ms. Alexson announced that the Shellfish Subcommittee will meet at 7:00pm on January 8th in Meeting Room C. A representative from Marine Fisheries will be present. The Public Safety Facilities Committee will meet at 7:00pm on January 10th. The Veterans Board will hold their quarterly meeting on January 16th.

Mr. Marino received a resident concern regarding the quality of Christmas decorations in the downtown area, and would like to see them updated. Mr. Rauscher confirmed that the decorations were last replaced during one of his first terms on the Select Board, but does not recall who provided them. Mr. Marino will investigate.

Mr. Rauscher announced that the Electric Subcommittee will meet at 7:00pm on January 9th to discuss their upcoming budget presentations. The Water & Wastewater Committee will meet at 7:00pm on January 10th.

Old Business

Ms. Alexson asked for an update on the High Street crosswalks. Mr. Marino confirmed that flashing lights have been ordered, and one will be placed at each of the two crosswalks near the Middle and High School on High Street. The speed limit at Lord Square will be reduced, and the DPW will be putting up the new signs shortly.

Mr. Mootafian outlined the next few Select Board meetings.

-) Tuesday, January 22nd at 7:30pm – Triboard Meeting to hold budget presentations and capital discussion
-) Monday, January 28th at 7:00pm – Regular Select Board meeting
-) Wednesday, January 30th at 7:00pm – First budget meeting. Budget discussions will be the only item on the agenda.

Miscellaneous & Correspondence

None.

Vote: Ms. Alexson moved to adjourn, and Mr. Whitmore seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The Select Board adjourned at 8:38pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page
01.08.19*